



FAIRFAX COUNTY

Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
Office of Building Code Services
12055 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5504

November 9, 2001

01-12

TO: All Architects, Builders and Developers

SUBJECT: Fiberglass Columns Used in Construction Regulated by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code

Effective immediately, all fiberglass columns used in construction regulated by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) for the purpose of transferring structural loads, are not approved for use in Fairfax County. Fiberglass columns are not identified as permitted materials in any of the model codes enforced as part of the VUSBC. Furthermore, the information received to date indicates that fiberglass columns are not equivalent to those allowed by the VUSBC. Nor are these columns listed under any nationally recognized research report as an alternative, equivalent material as required by Sections 112.1, 112.2, and 112.4 of the VUSBC.

Fiberglass columns may be approved as a non-load bearing architectural feature in an exterior application. If intended for interior use, the fiberglass column shall not exceed a smoke density rating of 450, based on the ASTM E-84 testing protocol. Permit applicants must provide the manufacturer's flame spread and smoke density rating information to the Office of Building Code Services (OBCS) staff as a condition of approval during the plan review process. This data will be required and verified again by field inspection staff during the final inspection approval process. Section 318 of the 1995 CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code or Section 803 of the 1996 BOCA National Building Code, as adopted by the VUSBC, contain additional information and use restrictions for interior material uses.

If you have questions or need further clarification please contact Paul Lynch, Director, Residential Inspections Division at (703) 324-1972 or Chris McArtor, Deputy Director, Building Plan Review Division at (703) 324-1645.

SIGNATURE ON ORIGINAL

Zofia A. Zager, Director
Office of Building Code Services

ZAZ/pml

cc: John Wesley White, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
Audrey C. Clark, Director, Building Plan Review Division, OBCS
Paul M. Lynch, Director, Residential Inspections Division, OBCS
L. Ray Pylant, Director, Commercial Inspections Division, OBCS